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Santa Clarita Valley History In Pictures

Whittaker-Bermite Site
Saugus, California



The Bermite Powder Co. manufactured explosives, flares and small munitions on this property in Saugus, southeast of Bouquet Junction, from about 1934 to 1987. The company and the property played an important role in the needs of the U.S. military during World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict.

On the downside, more than 275 known contaminants were left behind, some of which percolated into the groundwater below the 996-acre property.

Bermite was acquired in 1986 by missile maker Whittaker Corp. Around 1989, plans were made for the area to be developed into a residential community to be called Porta Bella. Whittaker sold the Saugus property to a company that cleans polluted land in 1999, just before going out of business as the result of a hostile takeover.

It is not known exactly what is going on in this aerial photo, which was shot, according to photographer Gary Thornhill, in 1991. The apparatus on the truck at center appears to be a drilling rig.

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